

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CANBER 04299 020810Z

15

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 TAR-02 AID-20 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-11

FRB-02 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 TRSE-00 XMB-07 OPIC-12

CIEP-02 LAB-06 SIL-01 OMB-01 NSC-10 SS-15 STR-08

CEA-02 L-03 H-03 PA-03 PRS-01 USIA-15 RSR-01 /151 W

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R 020735Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1432

INFO AMCONSUL MELBOURNE

AMCONSUL SYDNEY

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EIND, EGEN, BBAK, AS

SUBJ: SPEECH BY MANAGING DIRECTOR OF CHRYSLER AUSTRALIA

1. AT AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE IN AUSTRALIA LUNCHEON
SPEECH AUGUST 1 IN MELBOURNE, PAUL MOORE, AMERICAN MANAGING
DIRECTOR OF CHRYSLER AUSTRALIA, REVIEWED RECENT GOA
ECONOMIC POLICY AND RELATIONS WITH INDUSTRY. SPEECH CRITICIZED
ROLE AND ACTIONS OF WHITLAM GOVERNMENT IN UNUSUALLY SEVERE TERMS.
PRESS REPORTS QUOTE SPEAKER AS SAYING "INDUSTRY IS UNDER
ATTACK FROM ALL QUARTERS - ENVIRONMENTALISTS, CONSUMER GROUPS -
BUT THERE IS A NEW DEVELOPMENT IN AUSTRALIA, OUR NEW SILENT PARTNER.
BUT HE IS FAR FROM SILENT, WANTING TO PARTICIPATE IN DECISION
MAKING AND IS ATTEMPTING TO MANIPULATE BUSINESS THROUGH
VARIOUS CONTROLS, ALTHOUGH HE HAS NO EQUITY. THE SILENT PARTNER
IS OF COURSE THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT."

2. ACCORDING TO PRESS COVERAGE, MR. MOORE CRITICIZED NEW PRICES
JUSTIFICATION TRIBUNAL (EFFECTIVE AUGUST 1) PREDICTING IT WOULD
BE INEFFECTIVE AND "IT CAN ON ITS OWN INITIATE INVESTIGATIONS
OR EFFECTIVELY HAVE ITS OWN WITCH HUNTS AGAINST ANY COMPANY IT
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CHOOSSES". SPEAKER IS ALSO REPORTED AS CRITICIZING RECENT GOA

ACTION TO REDUCE TARIFFS 25 PERCENT, INDICATING SUDDENNESS OF THE ACTION PLACED INVESTMENT EXPANSION AND EMPLOYMENT IN JEOPARDY AND COULD LEAD TO INADEQUATE PROFITS FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT.

3. IN OTHER FIELDS MR. MOORE IS DESCRIBED AS ACCUSING THE GOVERNMENT OF POLICIES WHICH COULD REGULATE THE MINING INDUSTRY INTO BANKRUPTCY, TRYING TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF CARS IN AUSTRALIA IN FAVOR OF A UTOPIAN PUBLIC TRANSPORT SYSTEM, TRYING TO COMPLETELY DOMINATE THE MEDICAL PROFESSION, KEEPING THE OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY PAROCHIAL AND STIFLING THE EXPANSION OF THE BHP STEEL COMPANY.

4. COMMENT: GOA HAS IN RECENT WEEKS BEEN SENSITIVE TO THE AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY WHICH IS LARGELY AMERICAN-OWNED. PRIME MINISTER IN JUNE PRESS CONFERENCE SEVERELY CRITICIZED GENERAL MOTORS-HOLDEN FOR DECISION TO APPOINT AN AMERICAN NATIONAL TO SUCCEED A RETIRING AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL AS MANAGING DIRECTOR. THIS EPISODE WAS LATER FOLLOWED BY ADVERSE WHITLAM COMMENTS ON GM-HOLDEN DECISION TO RAISE VEHICLE PRICES. IN ADDITION, PROTRACTED STRIKE IN FORD MOTOR COMPANY PLANT IN VICTORIA ATTRACTED SERIES OF SEVERELY CRITICAL COMMENTS BY LABOUR MINISTER CAMERON RESPECTING FORD MANAGEMENT IN PARTICULAR AND LATER BROADENED TO GENERAL ATTACK ON ROLE OF MULTI-NATIONALS IN AUSTRALIA. WHILE THE CRITICISMS OF GENERAL MOTORS-HOLDEN AND OF FORD WERE POLITICALLY MOTIVATED AND NOT JUSTIFIED BY THE FACTS, THEY ATTRACTED WIDE-SPREAD PUBLIC ATTENTION AND EDITORIAL DISCUSSION.

5. AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND, MOORE HAS SHOWN LITTLE POLITICAL SENSITIVITY AND THIS UNUSUALLY SHARP SPEECH BY AN AMERICAN EXECUTIVE OF CHRYSLER, ESPECIALLY AS IT TOUCHES ON A WIDE RANGE OF POLICY AREAS OUTSIDE THE AUTOMOBILE INDUSTRY, SEEMS LIKELY TO DRAW FIRE FROM OFFICIAL QUARTERS.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 02 AUG 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973CANBER04299
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: CANBERRA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730863/aaaabucx.tel
Line Count: 93
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23 OCT 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <23-Oct-2001 by eisnerah>; APPROVED <12-Dec-2001 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SPEECH BY MANAGING DIRECTOR OF CHRYSLER AUSTRALIA
TAGS: EIND, EGEN, BBAK, AS
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005